

## Message Text

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 USNATO 1958

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, NATO  
SUBJ: AN EVENTUAL SUCCESSOR TO NATO SYG LUNS

REF: BRUSSELS 3256

BEGIN SUMMARY: RECENT REPORTS IN THE BELGIAN PRESS OF A SENIOR BELGIAN OFFICIAL'S INTEREST IN REPLACING JOSEPH LUNS AS NATO SYG (REFTEL) HAVE SPARKED RENEWED DISCUSSION AT NATO HEADQUARTERS ABOUT LUNS' FUTURE. BASED ON COMMENTS VOLUNTEERED HERE, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT LUNS' STANDING HAS DETERIORATED IN RECENT MONTHS AND THAT SERIOUS ATTENTION IS BEING GIVEN IN CAPITALS TO THE SUCCESSION. THESE DEVELOPMENTS INEVITABLY WILL LEAD THE ALLIES TO SEEK US VIEWS ON THIS DELICATE ISSUE. IN THIS MESSAGE WE ADDRESS THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE TACTICAL HURDLES WE CONFRONT AND POSSIBLE CHOICES AS LUNS' SUCCESSOR. END SUMMARY.

1. WE SENSE A GROWING CONSENSUS THAT THE TIME HAS COME TO BEGIN TO CONSIDER A SUCCESSOR TO LUNS, WHO IS NOW IN HIS SIXTH YEAR OF TENURE AS NATO SECRETARY GENERAL. THERE IS NO FIXED TERM FOR THE POSITION AND IN NATO'S 27-YEAR HISTORY, LUNS IS THE FIFTH SECRETARY GENERAL. HIS PREDECESSOR, MANUEL BROSIO, HELD THE OFFICE FOR SEVEN YEARS AND DIRK STIKKER, BROSIO'S PREDECESSOR, REMAINED IN OFFICE FOR THREE YEARS.

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2. WE HAVE NO DIRECT INDICATION FROM LUNS THAT HE HAS GIVEN THOUGHT TO STEPPING DOWN, THROUGH WE UNDERSTAND HIS DIRECTEUR OF CABINET IS GIVNG THOUGHT TO ALTERNATE EMPLOYMENT ONCES LUNS LEAVES. LUNS HIMSELF HAS SQUELCHED RECENT RUMORS ABOUT HIS IMPENDING DEPARTURE, WISHING, PERHAPS, TO UNDERSCORE HIS INTENTION TO REMAIN IN OFFICE AS LONG AS POSSIBLE. THUS, HE MAY RAISE THE SUBJECT WITH SENIOR US OFFICIALS DURING HIS APRIL 6-13 TRIP TO THE US AND MAY ALSO INTEND AT THE MAY 10 NATO SUMMIT GATHERING TO AFFIRM HIS INTENTION TO STAY ONE. NEVERTHELESS, WE ASSUME THAT LUNS, REALISTICALLY, IS

BEGINNING TO CONSIDER HIS EVENTUAL RETIREMENT AND THAT OUR ALLIES WILL PAY INCREASING ATTENTION TO THIS ISSUE IN THE PERIOD AHEAD.

3. US TACTICS: THE US WILL NEED TO MOVE CAREFULLY IN ORDER TO STEER EVENTS IN A SATISFACTORY DIRECTION. FIRST, WE BELIEVE THE US LOT INDICATE ANY INTEREST IN REPLACING LUNS UNTIL THE US HAS DECIDED UPON ITS PREFERRED CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED HIM. TO DO SO WOULD KNOCK THE REMAINING EFFECTIVE PROPS OUT FROM UNDER LUNS AND PROBABLY PRECIPITATE HIS RESIGNATION PERHAPS IN ADVANCE OF AN ALLIED CONSENSUS ON A SUCCESSOR. LUNS IS A PROUD AND SENSITIVE MAN WHO HAS SERVED THE ALLIANCE AND THE US GENERALLY WELL. TO HASTEN HIS EXIT IN AN UNSEEMLY WAY WOULD THUS BE A DISSERVICE BOTH TO HIM PERSONALLY AND THE ALLIANCE, WHOSE COHESION AND STRENGTH ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE US.

4. SECOND, WE BELIEVE THAT, ONCE US DECISIONS ARE TAKEN, WE SHOULD PLAN ON A TRANSITION PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS TO A YEAR, ALLOWING A GRACEFUL EXIT FOR LUNS AND TIME FOR HIS SUCCESSOR TO PREPARE FOR HIS NEW RESPONSIBILITIES AND DISENGAGE FROM HIS FORMER JOB.

5. THIRD, ALSO AFTER US DECISIONS ARE TAKEN, WE BELIEVE THAT THE US SHOULD APPROACH LUNS DIRECTLY, INDICATING THAT IT  
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IS CONCERNED ABOUT HIS EVENTUAL REPEAT EVENTUAL SUCCESSOR AND ASKING LUNS' ADVICE ABOUT POSSIBLE CANDIDATES. LUNS WILL APPRECIATE OUR DIRECTNESS, AND WE NEED SAY NO MORE TO PERSUADE HIM TO PALN FOR HIS OWN DEPARTURE. SINCE HE KNOWS IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME, OUR CANDOR WITH HIM DIRECTLY WILL BE ALL THE MORE GRATIFYING AND WILL ALLOW HIM TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK WITH OTHER ALLIES FOR AN EVENTUAL ANNOUNCEMENT THAT HE PLANS TO RETIRE.

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6. FOURTH, DEPENDING UPON LUNS' REPLY, BUT AFTER A DECENT INTERVAL FOR HIS OWN ACTIVITIES WITH REGARD TO RELINQUISHING HIS POST, WE SHOULD OPEN CONSULTATIONS WITH KEY ALLIES ON THE CHOICE OF A SUCCESSOR. IF WE HAVE A CANDIDATE FIRMLY IN MIND, WE CAN STRONGLY INFLUENCE EUROPEAN VIEWS; HOWEVER, WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALSO THE STRONG VIEWS PRO AND CON LIKELY TO BE ADVANCED FOR VARIOUS FAVORITE SONS, ALLOWING A CONSENSUS TO EMERGE AS NATURALLY AS POSSIBLE. WE DO NOT RULE OUT FRANKLY INFORMING SOME ALLIES OF VIEWS WE MAY HOLD, BUT OUR HAND SHOULD BE SEEN AS LITTLE AS POSSIBLE.

7. FIFTH, IN OUR VIEW, THIS PROCESS CANNOT BE INITIATED BEFORE THE NATO SUMMIT IN MAY WITHOUT BRUISING SENSIBILITIES AT NATO HEADQUARTERS AND IN CAPITALS. HOWEVER, AN EFFORT LAUNCHED AFTER THE NATO SUMMIT COULD CULMINATE IN AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN DECEMBER ON THE SUCCESSOR, THOUGH THERE MAY PROVE TO BE ADVANTAGES IN DEFERRING A CHANGE UNTIL THE SPRING OF 1978.

8. SIXTH, IF WE ARE TO AVOID AN ITALIAN CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF SYG, AN IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IF THE COMMUNISTS ASSUME POSITIONS IN THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT, WE SHOULD ASSURE THAT THE DEPUTY SYG, PAOLO PANSA CEDRONIA, IS REPLACED BY AN ITALIAN SOON. WE UNDERSTAND THAT PANSA IS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR THE AMBASSADORSHIP TO WASHINGTON, WHICH WOULD OPEN THE WAY TO THE SELECTION OF AN ITALIAN SUCCESSOR TO PANSA IN THE  
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SUMMER OF 1977. BASED UPON THE DISTRIBUTION OF SENIOR POSITIONS AT NATO HEADQUARTERS, AN ITALIAN WOULD BE IN LINE FOR THIS SLOT.

9. POSSIBLE SUCCESSORS: WE SUGGEST THAT, FOLLOWING THE PRELIMINARY STEPS OUTLINED ABOVE, THE DEPARTMENT MAKE APPROPRIATE SOUNDINGS IN OSLO, COPENHAGEN, THE HAGUE, BRUSSELS, LUXEMBOURG AND OTTAWA FOR VIEWS ON POSSIBLE CANDIDATES FROM THOSE COUNTRIES. OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES, WE RULE OUT ICELAND BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE AND LACK OF DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT, ITALY FOR REASONS CITED ABOVE, PORTUGAL BECAUSE OF ITS LIMITED INVOLVEMENT IN NATO AFFAIRS, THE UK BECAUSE OF THE NUMERICAL PREDOMINANCE OF ITS NATIONALS ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF, FRANCE BECAUSE OF ITS SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP TO NATO, THE FRG BECAUSE OF RESIDUAL CONCERNS ABOUT THE GERMAN ROLE, AND GREECE AND TURKEY BECAUSE OF THEIR SPECIAL PROBLEMS. A CANADIAN CANDIDATE MIGHT ALSO PRESENT PROBLEMS BECAUSE OF THE POTENTIAL IMPLICATION OF NORTH AMERICAN PREDOMINANCE IF THERE WERE A CANADIAN SYG WHILE TWO OF THE THREE MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS CONTINUE TO BE AMERICANS. A BRITISH CANDIDATE MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE, PROVIDED ADJUSTMENTS WERE MADE ELSEWHERE ON THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF, BUT NO ONE OF ISMAY'S STATURE APPEARS TO BE STANDING IN THE WINGS.

10. JUST AS THERE ARE FEW OUTSTANDING STATESMEN ON THE EUROPEAN SCENE TODAY, THERE ARE FEW OBVIOUS CANDIDATES FOR THE

POSITION OF NATO SECRETARY GENERAL. FRG DEFENSE MINISTER LEBER IS REPORTEDLY INTERESTED BUT SPEAKS NEITHER FRENCH NOR ENGLISH. WHILE SLIGHT KNOWLEDGE OF ONE IS A HANDICAP THAT BE OVERCOME, AS SPAAK PROVED, KNOWLEDGE OF NEITHER IS DISQUALIFYING. LUXEMBOURG PRIME MINISTER THORN IS YOUNG, VIGOROUS, ABLE AND PERHAPS WILLING. HOWEVER, NONE, SO FAR AS WE KNOW, HAS TESTED HIS INTEREST AND HE MAY SEE HIS FUTURE IN LUXEMBOURG AND ELSEWHERE AS TOO IMPORTANT TO INTERRUPT BY A STINT IN THE NATO JOB WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A CULMINATION RATHER THAN A STEPPING STONE. DESPITE RESERVATIONS ABOUT A BRITISH CANDIDATE, SOME ALLIES MIGHT WELCOME THE NOMINATION OF SIR  
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JOHN KILLICK, THE CURRENT UK PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE, WHO IS NOTED FOR HIS OUTSPOKEN SUPPORT OF NATO AND EFFECTIVE DEFENSES EVEN AT THE COST OF ANTAGONIZING HIS OUT AUTHORITIES.

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11. PROBABLY, HOWEVER, THE TIME HAS COME TO CHANGE THE IMAGE OF THE JOB, MAKING IT MORE OBVIOUSLY RESPONSIVE TO A YOUNGER GENERATION AND MORE ATTRACTIVE AS A WAY STATION TO EVENTUALLY GREATER NATIONAL OR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. IN THIS CONNECTION, A POSSIBLE CANDIDATE MIGHT BE VISCOUNT ETIENNE DAVIGNON, FORMERLY POLITICAL DIRECTOR OF THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CURRENTLY EC COMMISSIONER FOR INDUSTRY AND THE INTERNAL MARKET. DAVIGNON IS ACKNOWLEDGED TO BE ONE OF THE BRIGHTEST YOUNGER OFFICIALS ON THE EUROPEAN SCENE, AND EARNED INTERNATIONAL RENOWN FOR HIS "DAVIGNON REPORT"--WHICH BROKE THE GROUND FOR POLITICAL CONSULTATIONS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY FRAMEWORK--AND FOR HIS LEADERSHIP IN THE FOUNDING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENERGY AGENCY. DAVIGNON HAS THE ADDITIONAL ADVANTAGE OF A PROFOUND KNOWLEDGE OF NATO AFFAIRS, BASED UPON HIS RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY. DESPITE HIS MANY QUALIFICATIONS, HOWEVER, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WOULD SUPPORT HIS CANDIDACY FOR THE NATO POSITION, ESPECIALLY IF VANDEN BOEYNANTS WERE TO SEEK IT, AND DAVIGNON HIMSELF MAY HAVE

DOMESTIC POLITICAL AMBITIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE THE NATO JOB  
LESS ATTRACTIVE TO HIM.STRAUSZ-HUPE

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